

Drawings

The examiner objects to the drawings because reference numeral 29 is shown in the drawings but not described in the specification. It is respectfully submitted that reference numeral 29 is indeed described on page 8, lines 1-3, of the specification. Therefore, neither a proposed drawing correction nor an amendment to the specification is needed.

REJECTIONS

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 10-30, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by *Moore* (US 6,190,026).

Claims 5, 6, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Moore* (US 6,190,026) in view of *Mizobe* (U.S. 5,249,104).

Claims 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Moore* (US 6,190,026).

Claims 31-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Moore* (US 6,190,026) in view of either *Waldmann* (U.S. 6,139,171) or *Fürst et al.* (U.S. 6,152,590).

Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating therein the features of claims 5 and 6 and features disclosed in the specification in regard to the transmissive area becoming visible only when the illumination element is switched on (described in the paragraph bridging pages 1 and 2; on page 8, lines 4-11; in last sentence of paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10). Because of the inclusion of the features of claims 5 and 6 in claim 1, the patentability of claim 1 will be discussed in view of the combination of *Moore* (US 6,190,026) and *Mizobe* (U.S. 5,249,104).

The vehicle light according to the invention has at least one vehicle light housing that has an open end and is arranged on an inner side of a vehicle part. At least one illumination element is arranged in the vehicle light housing. The vehicle part has a light-transmissive area covering the open end of the at least one vehicle light housing, wherein

the light-transmissive area is at least partially transmissive for rays emitted by the at least one illumination element. The light-transmissive area of the vehicle part is provided with a protective layer 31, and the protective layer 31 is so thin that the rays emitted by the at least one illumination element 22, 22a when switched on penetrate the protective layer 31 but so thick that the light-transmissive area cannot be detected when looking onto the vehicle part. Advantageously, this protective layer 31 has the same color as the vehicle. The vehicle part therefore has a uniform appearance in the area of the vehicle light. The transmissive area becomes visible only when the illumination element is switched on. (See paragraph bridging pages 1 and 2; page 8, lines 4-11; last sentence of paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10).

The cited prior art reference U.S. 6,190,026 to Moore does not show such a configuration. This patent shows an emblem 100 which is comprised of several parts including a housing frame 200 and a rear enclosure 600 in which the illumination device 301 is arranged and a display template 401 secured between the housing frame and the rear enclosure. The emblem 100 is arranged on the car body of the vehicle, for example, by gluing, screwing or the like (see col. 2, lines 11 to 14). This emblem is therefore clearly visible from the exterior of the car body even when the illumination element is not switched on. In any case, this patent does not describe a protective layer applied to the transmissive area of the car body wherein the protective layer is configured so thin that rays of light emitted by the illumination element can penetrate but so thick that the transmissive area, when the illumination device is not switched on, is invisible from the exterior, i.e., a person looking onto the vehicle part provided with the transmissive layer cannot see the transmissive layer until the illumination device is switched on.

The cited prior art reference U.S. 5,249,104 shows an optical display device where the illumination means 3 are seated on a printed circuit board 2 and project into cavities 6 of a light transmissive part 5A (Fig. 1). On a light dispersing plate 12 provided on the end face of the part 5A a color sheet 11 is provided. The light-transmissive part 5A together with the plate 12 and the sheet 11 is enclosed by the housing 7, i.e., the housing end plate covers the layers 10, 11, 12.

The coating 9 is non-transmissive (see col. 1, lines 65-66) and the portions not

covered by the coating 9 provide the pattern 8 to be displayed (see col. 1, line 68, to col. 2, line 1). The "coating" 8 is not a coating or layer but simply the pattern created by not applying the coating 9. The layer 10 is a half mirror which reflects sunshine in the daytime to thereby display the pattern (see col. 4, lines 43 to 47).

The color sheet 11 is embedded in the light-transmissive part 5A. Since the light-transmissive part 5A is positioned within the housing 7 and covered by the housing relative to the exterior, a person skilled in the art could not find a suggestion in regard to providing the the transmissive area of the vehicle part itself with a coating. Moreover, the color sheet 11 provides nothing but a color effect; nowhere is there any disclosure that the color layer makes the transmissive layer invisible until the illumination device is switched on.

The light dispersing plate 12 is simply provided to ensure uniform light distribution; it does not make the transmissive layer invisible until the illumination device is switched on.

Thus, none of the "protective layers" 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 specified by the examiner has the features defined in instant claim 1: the protective layer is so thin that the rays emitted by the at least one illumination element when switched on penetrate through the protective layer and so thick that the light-transmissive area cannot be detected when looking onto the vehicle part.

Therefore, the combination of the two cited U.S. patents does not lead a person skilled in the art to the features claimed in claim 1 as amended.

The prior art reference U.S. 6,152,590 shows an exterior rear view mirror having a mirror head with a lens 4 through which light can exit in the downward direction onto the ground. The lens 4 is always visible, independent of the illumination means 9 being switched on or off. Therefore, this cited prior art reference cannot lead a person skilled in the art to the solution claimed in claim 1 of the present invention.

The cited prior art reference U.S. 6,139,171 describes a lens 3 in an exterior rear view mirror 1 which according to col. 4, line 26 and 27, can be colored. However, this has nothing to do with the solution according to the invention. Even when the lens 3 is colored, it is still detectable when the illumination element is switched off. Therefore, this prior art reference also does not provide a person skilled in the art with a suggestion to apply a protective coating onto the light transmissive area of a vehicle part so that the light

transmissive area, when the illumination element is switched off, is not visible from the exterior but is visible only when the illumination device is switched on.

Therefore, none of the cited prior art references can suggest a protective coating applied onto the transmissive area of the vehicle part having the features a claimed.

Reconsideration of the rejections under 35 UC 102 and 103 is therefore respectfully requested.

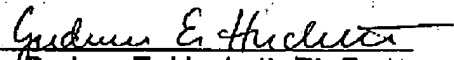
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further objections or suggestions, the undersigned would appreciate a phone call or e-mail from the examiner to discuss appropriate amendments to place the application into condition for allowance.

Authorization is herewith given to charge any fees or any shortages in any fees required during prosecution of this application and not paid by other means to Patent and Trademark Office deposit account 50-1199.

Respectfully submitted on February 7, 2003.


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Encl.: - amended claims 1, 7 (clean copies and marked-up version - 2 sheets);
- time extension petition (1 sheet)

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2/7/03: Amd for Ser. No. 10/016,368 - Inventor(s): Zimm mann et al. - Filing Date: 12/10/2001

MARKED-UP CLAIM VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Amended) A vehicle light (5, 5a) for vehicles, comprising:
 - at least one vehicle light housing (21, 21a) having an open end and configured to be arranged on an inner side of a vehicle part (4, 35) of the vehicle;
 - at least one illumination element (22, 22a) arranged in the at least one vehicle light housing (21, 21a);
 - wherein the vehicle part (4, 35) has a light-transmissive area covering the open end of the at least one vehicle light housing (21, 21a), wherein the light-transmissive area is at least partially transmissive for rays emitted by the at least one illumination element (22, 22a);
 - wherein the light-transmissive area of the vehicle part (4) is provided with a protective layer (31);
 - wherein the protective layer (31) is so thin that the rays emitted by the at least one illumination element (22, 22a) when switched on penetrate through the protective layer (31) and so thick that the light-transmissive area cannot be detected from an exterior of a vehicle when the at least one illumination element (22, 22a) is switched off.
7. (Amended) The vehicle light according to claim 1.5, wherein the protective layer (31) has the same color as the vehicle.